

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-7 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 8-18 are added. The following is the status of the claims of the above-captioned application, as amended.

Claim 8 (New). A process for producing a vegetable or fruit product, comprising the steps of:

- a) crushing, chopping or slicing a vegetable or fruit into pieces of 1 to 30 mm; before or after step
- a) blanching the vegetable or fruit pieces at a temperature of 60 to 90°C; and
- b) holding the blanched vegetable or fruit pieces in the presence of an endo-acting pectinase activity at a temperature from 60 to 90°C.

Claim 9 (New). The process of claim 8, further comprising optionally blending the blanched vegetable or fruit pieces.

Claim 10 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the endo-acting pectinase activity is selected from the list comprising pectate lyase, polygalacturonase, pectin lyase, pectin methyl esterase and pectin acetyl esterase.

Claim 11 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the pectate lyase is derived from a strain of *Bacillus sp.*

Claim 12 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the pectate lyase is derived from a strain of *B. licheniformis*.

Claim 13 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the pectate lyase is derived from a strain of *B. subtilis*.

Claim 14 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the pectate lyase has the amino acid sequence SEQ ID NO:1.

Claim 15 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the pectate lyase has the amino acid sequence SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim 16 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the vegetable is a root vegetable.

Claim 17 (New). The process of claim 8, wherein the vegetable is a carrot, celery, beetroot, radish, or horseradish.

Claim 18.(New). The process of claim 8, wherein the fruit is an apple, pear, mango, grape, tomato, citrus, prune, or cherry.